

DOCKET NO.: STEV-0004
Application No.: 10/813,247
Office Action Dated: February 23, 2005

Amendments to the Specification

Please replace paragraphs [0015], [0020], [0030], [0031], and [0033] as follows:

[0015] The crotch panel is fixably attached to the back of the undergarment and

comprises a free edge. When the casings are slidably engaged with the bands, such that the casings substantially cover the bands, the crotch panel is in a closed position, thereby covering the crotch opening of the undergarment. In the closed position, the free edge of the crotch panel can be fastened to the free edge of the front panel by any fasteners ~~know~~ known ~~VELCRO®~~, or in the art, for example, but not limited to, hook and pile fasteners, e.g., ~~Velcro~~VELCRO®, or a snap. When the crotch panel and the casings are slid from front to back, the leg bands are exposed and the crotch panel is in an open position. In the open position, the free edge of the crotch panel can be fastened to the back panel by any fasteners ~~know~~ in the art, for example, but not limited to, a hook and pile fastener, e.g., ~~Velcro~~VELCRO®, or a snap.

[0020] Overgarments can be provided for use with undergarments according to the present invention. When used with undergarments of the present invention, overgarments comprise a trunk area which encloses said underpants, a left leg area attached to said trunk, a right leg area attached to said trunk, and an overgarment opening which permits access to said crotch panel. The overgarment opening can comprise an overgarment fastener to secure said overgarment opening in a closed position. Suitable fasteners, which are understood by those skilled in the art, can include, but are not limited to a zipper, a snap, or a hook and pile fastener. Combinations of an undergarment and an overgarments can be provided wherein the undergarment is releasably attached to the overgarment. It may also be desirable to provide combinations wherein the undergarment is fixably attached to said overgarment.

[0030] In an open position, the free edge 14 of the crotch panel 12 is detached from the free edge 4 of the front panel 2. The crotch panel 12 can be secured to the back panel 6 in the open position with a fastener 23a and 23b, for example, ~~Velcro~~VELCRO® (hook and pile), between an area 22 on the crotch panel 12 and an area 24 on the back panel 6.

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[0031] Figures 2A and 2B provide back and front views, respectively, of one embodiment of the present invention where the crotch panel is closed. In a closed position, the free edge of the front panel 4 is secured to the crotch panel 12 with a fastener, for example, Velcro VELCRO® (hook and pile). An area 20 on the underneath part of the front panel 2 secures to an area 22 (not shown in Figure 2B) on the crotch panel 12. When the panel casings 16 and 18 are slidably engaged with the bands 8 and 10, respectively, the crotch panel is in the closed position, thereby covering the crotch opening of the undergarment.

[0033] Figure 4 shows an embodiment of an overgarment for use with an undergarment in accordance with the present invention, where an overgarment opening is in an open position. Overgarments can comprise a trunk area 100, which encloses an undergarment, left and right leg areas, 102 and 104 respectively, which are attached to the trunk area, and an overgarment opening 106. The overgarment opening 106 permits access to a crotch panel 12 of an undergarment. The overgarment opening can comprise an overgarment fastener 108 to secure the overgarment opening in a closed position. Suitable fasteners, as understood by those skilled in the art, can include, but are not limited to, a zipper, a snap, or a hook and pile fastener, e.g. Velcro VELCRO® (hook and pile). An undergarment of the present invention can be optionally attached as desired to an overgarment with a fastener 101. Attachment can be releasable or fixed.